United Nations A/71/173

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 July 2016

Original: English

Seventy-first session
Item 23 of the provisional agenda*

Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection, submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution 69/233.

* A/71/150.

16-12291 (E) 020816

Please recycle

Report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/233 on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection. It provides an update on sustainable tourism policies and practices since the issuance of the previous report on the subject (A/69/223).

The World Tourism Organization has sought input on a wide range of issues relevant to sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, both from UNWTO member States and States Members of the United Nations, as well as relevant agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, on achievements made during the reporting period.

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to submit to it a report on the implementation of resolution 69/233 at its seventy-first session, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other relevant agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, including recommendations on ways and means to promote sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, as a tool for fighting poverty and promoting sustainable development. As the specialized agency of the United Nations system vested with a central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, UNWTO was, in turn, requested to take the lead in preparing the present report.

2. Accordingly, early in 2016 UNWTO sent a request for updates from States Members of the United Nations and UNWTO member States in order to monitor the implementation of resolution 69/233. For many member States, national tourism strategies remain current with most ending by 2030.[1] Thirty-two UNWTO member States and territories provided an update on issues through follow-up notes verbales regarding the previous survey on the implementation of the resolution since 2014. A list of respondents is contained in the annex to the present report. Among them, 19 countries responded that they had strengthened their national guidelines or frameworks on sustainable tourism since 2014. UNWTO also sought input from agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other international organizations, in addition to reviewing existing relevant initiatives and projects. The present report was prepared on the basis of the responses received and information acquired through this process and from relevant publications and documents of UNWTO, agencies of the United Nations system and international institutions. The main findings from this year's report are in line with the findings from the previous report, which include, among others, that there is a need for more public-private partnership, more technical and financial assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises on the ground in the diversification of local product development, improved measurement and international standards for monitoring and assessing sustainability with the use of innovative technology and non-traditional resources and to incorporate more local, indigenous values and practices into tourism, making the sector an agent of change towards sustainable consumption and production in environmental and cultural conservation, socioeconomic well-being and resilient tourism planning and development, as echoed in the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals contained therein.

II. Developments since the adoption of resolution 69/233

A. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals

3. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The

[1] Since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization on the subject (A/69/223) and the adoption by the General Assembly, by its resolution 70/1, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

future we want", the General Assembly stressed that the interactive, cross-cutting nature of the tourism sector allowed it to create linkages with other sectors and make significant contributions to the three aspects of sustainable development: economic, environmental and sociocultural, thus placing tourism high in priority in the implementation of that mandate, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.[2] It further stated the need to support and invest in sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity-building that empower small and medium-sized enterprises and indigenous communities by improving local welfare and livelihoods through the promotion and conservation of the environment, wildlife, flora, biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural diversity.

4. Tourism was recognized in the 2030 Agenda for its capacity to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by fostering economic growth, creating jobs, promoting local culture and accelerating the change to more sustainable consumption and production patterns. The role of tourism is specifically included in Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production patterns and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, respectively. The cross-cutting nature of tourism, however, positions it to support all 17 Goals. Doing so requires taking a holistic approach to the cooperation of all stakeholders and responsibility over natural, cultural, social and economic resources for development. Indeed, there is a need and an opportunity for the tourism sector to act as an agent of change by focusing on accelerating sustainable consumption and production patterns, while being an essential instrument for the use of both developed and developing countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, in achieving Goals 8, 12 and 14, as well as supporting the other 14 Goals.

B. 10-Year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns and the sustainable tourism programme

5. The adoption of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns was an operational outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and was welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/193. The 10-year framework recognizes sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, to be a significant driver for sociocultural and economic change through its sustainable tourism programme, one of the initial programmes of the 10-year framework agreed upon at the Conference. It is led jointly by UNWTO and the Governments of France, Morocco, and the Republic of Korea, and brings together a variety of stakeholders partnering for its effective implementation. The programme aims at catalysing change in tourism operations over the next decade towards sustainability through evidence-based decision-making, innovation, collaboration among stakeholders, monitoring and the adoption of a life-cycle approach for continuous improvement. Given the nature of tourism, a human activity through which new experiences are actively sought, the sector offers the unique opportunity to act as an agent of positive change to existing lifestyles and behaviours. The programme catalyses the development and implementation of activities, projects and good practices in resource-efficient and low-carbon tourism planning, reducing the loss of biodiversity, conserving ecosystems, preserving

[2] UNWTO, *Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook* (Madrid, 2013).

cultural heritage, alleviating poverty, improving sustainable livelihoods and adapting to the reality of a changing climate. The programme offers a major opportunity to ensure that tourism contributes effectively to sustainable development within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. In 2015, the programme developed several flagship and catalytic projects that aim at accelerating sustainable consumption and production in the tourism sector and established its social media presence on Twitter and Facebook, among other major milestones.

C. International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017

6. The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/193, recalled its resolutions 65/148 on the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, 68/207 on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America and 69/233 on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection, took note of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of UNWTO at its twenty-first session, held in Medellin, Colombia, from 12 to 17 September 2015, on the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017, and proclaimed 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The General Assembly invited UNWTO, mindful of the provisions contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67, to collaborate with governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of the International Year. The Assembly encouraged all actors to take advantage of the International Year to promote action at all levels, including through international cooperation, and to support sustainable tourism as a means of promoting and accelerating sustainable development, especially for poverty eradication and environmental and cultural protection.

D. International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories

7. In 2004, UNWTO launched the Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism, now known as the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories, to provide policymakers and tourism managers with a framework for regular gathering, analysis and communication of information related to tourism's impacts on the environmental, social and economic aspects of destinations. The goal of the Network is to support the development of better sustainable tourism policies through evidence-based decision-making in destinations around the world. At the first UNWTO Conference on the Global Observatories on Sustainable Tourism, held in Madrid in 2013, it was recognized that efficiently planned and managed tourism development has the potential to contribute to environment protection and poverty reduction by focusing on biodiversity assets. It was also recognized that tourism can strengthen the political force for conservation by actively promoting fundir.g and contributions.

8. There is a growing demand from tourism organizations and stakeholders for a more systematic application of monitoring, data collection and detection of early warning signals to support evidence-based decision-making. In 2004, UNWTO published the guidebook *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism*

Destinations,[3] which contains the UNWTO methodology for sustainable tourism indicators. A series of regional and national workshops on sustainable tourism indicators to train tourism officials and professionals on the application of the methodology were organized by UNWTO, and a demonstration technique and participatory approach was used at pilot destinations. This global initiative has expanded in an innovative, participatory, holistic manner for developing tools for monitoring and assessment, seeking to improve sustainability measurement further, especially with regard to non-traditional data.

9. Since 2004, many observatories have been established around the world. Some of the most outstanding observatories shared their experiences at the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories open consultation meeting on advancing the measurement of sustainable tourism development, held at UNWTO headquarters on 7 and 8 June 2016. The meeting highlighted important regional initiatives, such as the European Tourism Indicator System, that actively contribute to the establishment of observatories and fostering the sustainable development of tourism through evidence-based decision-making. The meeting aimed at better understanding the current practical needs of destinations through better definitions, methodologies and technologies to support the tourism sector, in particular destinations, in their sustainable tourism development.

10. Governments, the tourism sector, destinations and other stakeholders have addressed challenges to sustainable development, including those related to tourism, through national, regional and international policies. Other challenges exist with regard to the integration of sustainable consumption and production into daily life, stemming from the need for more consistent product development. Input received from Member States shows that ecotourism is being increasingly integrated into national frameworks for sustainable tourism, which is consistent with paragraphs 130 and 131 of "The future we want". In the meantime, UNWTO and the sustainable tourism programme of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns continue to actively promote and accelerate the integration of sustainable tourism and sustainable consumption and production through both policy-driven and action-oriented initiatives for all tourism stakeholders.

III. International initiatives relevant to sustainable tourism, including ecotourism

11. In 2014-2015, the UNWTO briefing paper on moving towards measuring the economic value of wildlife-watching tourism in Africa outlined a first step towards more systematic measuring of the economic value of the wildlife-watching tourism market segment in Africa and defining the role of the tourism sector in the fight against poaching. Input was gathered from the tourism and conservation authorities in Africa, as well as international and African-based tour operators, on available statistics, case study reviews and in-depth interviews. The participatory measurement set out in the methodology of the paper can aid in developing better monitoring systems for conserving wildlife, biodiversity and the environment, as

[3] UNWTO, *Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook* (2004).

well as evaluating the socioeconomic performance of a destination and the impact on livelihoods there, at the regional and national levels.

12. In addition, the impact of the "Wild for life" campaign, undertaken in May and June 2016, was felt across sectors and industries and focused on the importance of local involvement in wildlife conservation. The campaign was a joint marketing venture between the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which fostered the ability for participants to promote the intrinsic values of endangered species through social media channels to raise awareness of wildlife crime and illegal trade. The Convention on Biological Diversity called for further awareness and action in community involvement in the conservation of wildlife and habitat, as well as sustainable development, on the occasion of World Environment Day. World Oceans Day received much of the same awareness-raising through social media for the more sustainable use of oceans and marine resources and for addressing Sustainable Development Goal 14 in that regard. The need for sustainable behaviour at island destinations to protect marine resources and create improved socioeconomic welfare was mentioned in the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace, adopted at the first World Conference on Tourism for Development, held in Beijing from 18 to 21 May 2016.[4]

13. Improved marketing and communication with regard to sustainable practices can accelerate consumers' decision-making in line with their needs, which can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Accelerating the importance of local biodiversity and culture at destinations can bring more awareness at the national and global levels to initiate behavioural changes in accelerating sustainable consumption and production in the tourism sector and accelerating more sustainable, local tourism products which, in turn, can instil pride and self-identification with local values in sustainable development.

14. The role of tourism in advancing Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 12 was addressed at the Sustainable Tourism Conference and Symposium on Accelerating the Shift towards Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, held on 20 and 21 April 2016 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, through interactive discussions with ministers on the need to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and with representatives of the public and private sectors on effective stakeholder engagement and tourism performance. The discussions highlighted the need to fund and invest in sustainable consumption and production in tourism and sustainable development in order to empower young people, women and indigenous and local communities, generate more transnational and regional cooperation and improved local value chains on the ground and create more attractive products for local markets in a collaborative manner. During the discussions, the diversification of tourism products was called for, in order to ensure balance in demand. Balancing international, regional and domestic tourism demand is a priority for many African countries. Regional representatives from across the continent discussed how access to natural and cultural assets by the local population can foster pride and a diverse demand for products, which, in turn, fosters resilience by stimulating similar activities in other countries and reinforces the conservation of biodiversity, as

[4] Available from www.cvent.com/events/first-world-conference-on-tourism-for-development/custom-22-d99c4650f33042799c5884d453e2f194.aspx.

declared in the Medellín Statement on Tourism and Air Transport for Development, adopted at the Joint UNWTO/International Civil Aviation Organization High-Level Forum on Tourism and Air Transport for Development, held in Medellín, Colombia, on 14 September 2015.

15. During the reporting period, two major outcome documents resulted from high-level events, the Medellín Statement and the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace. The Medellín Statement was focused on fostering closer cooperation and dialogue between the aviation and tourism sectors in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Beijing declaration also included the pledge to advance the contribution of tourism to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 8, 12 and 14, and duly recognized tourism as an important tool for poverty eradication, development, conservation and peace.

16. Both outcome documents outlined tourism's potential to promote sustainable and resilient growth and development, as well as the important role tourism plays as a tool for empowering local and indigenous communities, including women and young people, particularly in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States. The Medellín Statement also emphasized that cooperation among all major stakeholders, including governments at the national, subnational and local levels, international organizations, the private sector and communities, was vital for achieving the objectives of sustainable tourism and that domestic tourism helped to achieve a better distribution of benefits, employment and wealth throughout the territory. The Medellín Statement drew on the close links between tourism and other sectors and how the development of domestic tourism should form an integral part of strategic development planning that contributes to strengthening resilience and sustainable development at the national and local levels by fostering pride and including local values in sustainable tourism plans and policies. The Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace highlighted tourism's ability to link sectors and mitigate climate change and global warming through the promotion of responsible tourism practices, which includes sustainable consumption and production.

17. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in its decision XII/5, set out the Chennai Guidance for the Integration of Biodiversity and Poverty Eradication, encouraged its implementation in accordance with national laws, priorities, plans, policies, actions and strategies. It also encouraged parties, governments, international organizations and relevant stakeholders to integrate the values of biodiversity, poverty eradication and sustainable development from indigenous, local communities through the sharing of information. In that regard, the Conference of the Parties welcomed the processes on the 2030 Agenda, given that sharing and adopting best practices in biodiversity for poverty eradication would be highly relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainable, resilient tourism and indigenous, local communities

18. As part of the thematic discussion on biodiversity and poverty eradication undertaken in the context of the above-mentioned decision, it was stressed that the involvement of indigenous peoples and other local communities and their cultural values of biodiversity continue to be a priority, recognizing the diverse, holistic and

intrinsic value of biodiversity, as well as its spiritual and cultural value, while using appropriate and effective non-market-based, market-based and rights-based approaches in alignment with national circumstances, visions and approaches (see para. 9 of decision XII/5). Such effective indigenous and local approaches to the conservation of biodiversity and its cultural significance should be taken into account in national-level plans and policies, especially for the tourism sector. The fifth national reports of various Member States to the Convention on Biological Diversity that were submitted in 2014 highlighted that well-integrated tourism development contributed to biodiversity conservation and the promotion of environment protection. The importance of biodiversity conservation and environment protection along with the advancement of the culture and social well-being of local and indigenous communities was also reflected and called for in the Medellín Statement and the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace.

19. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015, highlighted the need to link approaches in the tourism sector and disaster management, as well as the important role of ecosystems in mitigating risks. Given that climate change is creating more intense natural disasters around the world at an accelerated rate, linking tourism and disaster management, highlighting tourism's importance and impacts at a destination, creating synergies between stakeholders and promoting the use of innovative technologies are crucial for increasing resilience and mitigation of disasters at a destination. The Sendai Framework encouraged governments to engage with women, children, young people, indigenous peoples and other community-level practitioners in planning and implementing policies, plans and standards.

20. The Medellín Statement and the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace called for more indigenous involvement in tourism and the creation of more employment opportunities for those communities, especially for women and young people. Creating more options for indigenous community engagement and employment in tourism is of vital importance to instilling pride and empowerment. The projects of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in South Africa and Viet Nam and the use of the *ILO Toolkit on Poverty Reduction through Tourism*[5] offer opportunities and means of adopting, replicating and scaling sustainable tourism development at the local and indigenous levels while empowering indigenous communities, including women and young people, through capacity-building programmes aimed at eradicating poverty. Similarly, in 2013, UNWTO and the European Commission published the *Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook*, which emphasized tourism's ability to act as an agent of change in providing opportunities for socioeconomic development to combat poverty and conserving cultural and natural heritage in local, indigenous communities and developing destinations. The *Guidebook* takes a

[5] ILO, *Toolkit on Poverty Reduction through Tourism* (Geneva, 2013). Available from http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_162289.pdf.

comprehensive approach to tourism, covering a wide range of topics related to its planning, development, management and impact.[6]

21. Fostering the responsible use of living heritage for tourism purposes can also provide new employment opportunities while nurturing a sense of pride among community members. The UNWTO study *Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage* provides comprehensive baseline research on the links between tourism and intangible cultural heritage,[7] recognizing that the integration of intangible cultural heritage into sustainable tourism development programmes is uniquely suited to assist communities in helping to alleviate poverty and creating sustainable livelihoods while respecting the local heritage and environments. The first UNWTO/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Conference on Tourism and Culture was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from 4 to 6 February 2015. Under the theme "Building a new partnership", participants discussed challenges and opportunities faced by both the tourism and culture sectors. Participants endorsed the Siem Reap Declaration on Tourism and Culture and committed to encouraging and facilitating effective partnerships between governments and private and community organizations in both the tourism and cultural heritage sectors.

IV. International initiatives relevant to the measurement and technological advancement of sustainable tourism and ecotourism

22. For sustainability measurement in tourism to succeed, virtual tourism observatories and national statistical offices should support the destination in collecting data and providing it with visibility at the national and regional levels by creating more accessible, open and cost-effective information-sharing. Financial support from the national level to the destination level could also aid in developing more innovative and advanced systems for measurement. In conjunction with that, it can be beneficial to provide destination managers with toolkits for better and more effective measurement and training courses on how to use them. Sharing best practices and methodological approaches should be a constantly evolving process that promotes open exchanges in improvements and innovation between all stakeholders in sustainable tourism development and measurement. The various links between sustainability and accessibility, and the benefits thereof, in tourism can be clearly defined and ongoing synergies can be developed with all relevant stakeholders.

23. Such measurements and synergies have been shown to develop through the implementation of geographic information system (GIS) technology, especially those that are participatory and/or publicly implemented.[8] Such systems of measurement at the destination level are used by many local and indigenous communities to map their land and integrate their knowledge, perspectives and values, thereby empowering them as the safeguards of and experts on the

[6] See UNWTO, *Manual on Tourism and Poverty Alleviation, practical steps for destinations* (2010) and *Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook* (Madrid, 2013).

[7] UNWTO, *Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Madrid, 2012).

[8] See UNWTO, *Sustainable Tourism Governance and Management in Coastal Areas of Africa* (Madrid, 2013).

destination, its resources and their livelihoods. Such methods provide stakeholders at the national and regional levels with more perspectives from the community and destination levels in sustainable measurement, while also providing the means for locally led environmental and cultural protection and poverty eradication.

24. The UNWTO International Conference on Tourism and Technology, held in Nara, Japan from 1 to 4 June 2016, focused on developing the link between new technology and tourism in the Asia-Pacific region to examine the current emerging technologies that are of primary relevance to the tourism sector in benefiting travellers and the local population at a destination. The International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories open consultation meeting on advancing the measurement of sustainable tourism development explored the use of innovative technologies and methodologies, including GIS and geo-referenced data and the capability of data generation and analysis of mobile phones, to help measure the impacts on tourism at the destination level. Those emerging instruments in the tourism sector can support the efforts of local authorities to ensure the sustainable development of their destinations in a relevant and timely manner in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The event brought to light the need for international organizations to further advance and benefit from the currently available opportunities offered by voluntary, local information, traditional and non-traditional data, open dialogue, understanding and alignment with the work of relevant actors at destinations. Participants stressed that an inclusive, evidence-based approach was indispensable for sustainable and resilient tourism development.

V. Integration of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, into poverty eradication and environment protection policies

Overall findings of the World Tourism Organization implementation surveys

25. Upon analysing the results from the 31 respondents to the note verbale (see para. 2), UNWTO found that there is a trend of integrating sustainable tourism development, including ecotourism, into existing frameworks and policies by a growing number of Member States. About 77 per cent of respondents indicated that they had strengthened environment protection and natural and cultural heritage frameworks, whereas 26 respondents reported the adaptation of new frameworks or the enhancement of policies and programmes that have a direct impact on local and indigenous communities and small tourism entrepreneurs in order to assure sustainable development of tourism. Nineteen respondents indicated the need for technical assistance, technological advancement and/or better measurement, criteria and standards in order for sustainability to succeed. Those issues were integrated into some of their national policies and master plans. Since reporting to the General Assembly in 2014, Austria, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey have launched new national or regional tourism development strategies or have revised existing frameworks, in order to enhance sustainability and measurement while responding to changing global economic, sociocultural and environmental conditions.

26. UNDP has traditionally supported sustainable tourism through the sustainable development portfolio, delivering results at the country level and contributing to global partnerships such as the sustainable tourism programme of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. UNDP reported country interventions that focused on formulating tourism policies and plans that support sustainable development, developing sustainable nature-based tourism in critical biodiversity areas as an alternative to conventional practices that degrade ecosystems, enhancing the tourism sector and the resilience of local communities to climate change, reducing the sector's negative impact and supporting sustainable tourism public-private partnerships, its integration with local value chains and the design of new financing mechanisms. These are also areas of focus for many Member States, some of which implemented projects with the support of UNDP and other stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

27. Twenty-three of the respondents mentioned the development of national tourism policies and master plans and the implementation of more stakeholder engagement, public-private partnerships and general organization-building mechanisms and strategies. Many of the public-private partnerships in the policies, strategies and plans used financial and technical assistance, as well as international standards, certification and criteria, from entities and civil society organizations around the world. Examples of such partnerships and engagement reported include those with the African Development Bank, Blue Flag, the European Union, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, the Inter-American Development Bank, ILO, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, UNDP, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank, as well as the sustainable tourism programme of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. International standards and criteria that were used include those of the European Tourism Indicator System, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and UNWTO. Of the above-mentioned tourism policy and master plans, El Salvador, Morocco, Serbia and Seychelles specifically mentioned the importance of integrating sustainable consumption and production into such policies and plans, thereby directly addressing Sustainable Development Goal 12.

28. The respondents from ministries of tourism and the tourism sector sought input from, the participation of and implementation by other sectors and ministries to strengthen stakeholder engagement, sustainable tourism development for poverty eradication and the empowerment of local, indigenous communities. Such collaboration can be found in the Azerbaijan State programme on regional development for 2014-2018, which builds on their 2010-2014 State programme on tourism development and gleans support from the Ministry of the Economy in developing more small and medium-sized enterprises for stakeholder engagement in the development and empowerment of local and indigenous communities. The tourism strategy of Lebanon for 2015 focuses in particular on economic opportunities in rural areas to help local communities, protect biodiversity and eradicate poverty. Another example is the weaving development programme in Costa Rica, an initiative developed in 2014 to combat inequalities among territories and involve local stakeholders in defining their own development proposals. It represents a paradigm shift with regard to State intervention, proposing joint action

between public institutions and local stakeholders, thus intertwining two large axes: articulation and citizen participation.

29. Another example of public-private engagement for advancing sustainable tourism policies and plans that address the Sustainable Development Goals can be found in Europe. The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, of which Romania, Serbia and Slovakia are parties, adapted the strategy for sustainable tourism development of the Carpathians to the Convention, through which several Balkan nations and regions work together to promote and conserve natural and cultural heritage and values. Croatia reported on increasing rural and cultural tourism in their 2020 strategy for tourism development. Also in the Balkan region, the sustainable tourism initiative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on regional networking for strengthening cooperation and fostering transfer and adaptation of resource efficient and cleaner production was implemented in the countries of South-Eastern Europe, focusing on sustainable consumption and production with regard to resource efficiency (energy, water and waste management) in the hotel industry to mitigate the environmental impacts of tourism. The project, implemented in 2013, echoed previous UNIDO projects in Romania and Bulgaria from 2007 to 2010 and similar results in energy and economic savings were obtained through the UNWTO projects on a programme for energy efficiency in Kho Khao and sustainable tourism through energy efficiency with adaptation and mitigation measures, conducted in Thailand and Indonesia from 2008 to 2011. The UNDP project on moving towards carbon neutral tourism in Europe is also helping to establish sustainable financing mechanisms for low-carbon tourism infrastructure focusing on energy efficiency.

30. The UNDP-implemented Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility has continued to support sustainable tourism at the grass-roots level with more than 1,700 grants directly or indirectly connected with tourism and particularly ecotourism. In Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Seychelles, UNDP, with the support of the Facility, helped to mainstream biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector. The Equator Initiative, a partnership between the United Nations, governments, civil society and businesses, has produced more than 70 case studies connected to ecotourism.

31. Other local initiatives in advancing sustainability through tourism can be found in Colombia and Honduras. Colombia has developed sectoral standardization units for the preparation of sectoral technical standards for economic, environmental and sociocultural dimensions of tourism, in coordination with the National Chamber of Tourism of Honduras, the Small Hotels Association of Honduras and the USAID project ProParque. Honduras aims at implementing the Central American quality and sustainability integrated system and has developed a national wetlands policy that involves multiple stakeholders from the Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources, Environment and Mining and officials from the departments of biodiversity, forest conservation, protected areas and wildlife, with implementation by the Honduran Institute of Tourism. The engagement of the public and private sectors and civil society at the local level is evident in the measurement of sustainability and is crucial for sustainable tourism development.

32. For small island developing States, advancements were made in tourism policy and plans in Barbados, Seychelles and Saint Kitts and Nevis, which call for

international standards and regulations for sustainable tourism development, responsible product development and better human resource development and education for strengthening stakeholder engagement. The Barbados tourism master plan, 2014-2023, contains strategies to address such policies by making the local people and their benefits central to the plan for the next 10 years. The Seychelles national programme on the sustainable consumption and production strategy, 2015, highlights sustainable practices in their policy and focuses on promoting the Seychelles sustainable tourism label. The policy and plans encourage the tourism sector to adopt sustainable consumption and production practices by increasing the number of ecotourism activities at destinations. Given that small island developing States and developing countries are among the foremost locations affected by climate change and other environmental impacts, it is important that more sustainable consumption and production activities be integrated into their national tourism policies and plans and accelerated locally on the ground.

33. Some reported policies, strategies and plans to address and accelerate sustainable tourism practices include certifications, awards, international quality standards, local benchmarking and voluntary sustainability schemes. Indonesia is focusing on increasing standardization through their sustainable tourism destination development standard, certification of sustainable destinations and the development of a sustainable tourism observatory as part of their 2014 road map on sustainable tourism development. Romania reported on its ALECTOR project, which is a collaborative network of multilevel actors seeking to advance quality standards for heritage tourism at the cross-border level. In the Black Sea Basin joint operational programme for 2014-2016, projects focused on applying multiple tangible and intangible heritage values to create cross-border tourist products, invest in human capital and innovation and foster stronger regional partnerships and cooperation in the region. Many Member States have given and received awards and certifications for sustainable practices and innovation in tourism, as well as guidelines for more sustainable practices in the private sector. Such States include Austria, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Romania, Serbia, Seychelles, Spain, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Specific mention of technical and financial support, international standardization and criteria for sustainable tourism development were also found in the tourism master plans, strategies and policies of Bangladesh, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Lebanon, Morocco, Myanmar, Romania, Togo and Zimbabwe.

34. Guatemala, Indonesia, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Spain sought to integrate sustainability criteria from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council into tourism policies and master plans. Indonesia is incorporating that criteria, indicators from the UNWTO guidebook and local knowledge into their 2014 road map for standardization and the development of an observatory. Costa Rica, Romania, Spain and Turkey mentioned their efforts in implementing the Blue Flag criteria for sustainable development at beaches and coasts. Turkey further reported using the "Green Star" programme for accommodations. In Turkey, the Government and UNDP worked to promote sustainable and community-based tourism through policy formulation, the introduction of best practices, the setting up of grant schemes and the establishment of a national observatory. Moreover, the country reported the development of a sustainable tourism model and an indicator system based on the European Tourism Indicator System for tourism development and monitoring at the

local and community levels, as part of their rural development-oriented tourism development project in the Çoruh Valley.

35. Local employment, knowledge use and empowerment were specifically mentioned by Bhutan, Bulgaria, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Myanmar and Zimbabwe. All respondents, however, including Germany, Morocco, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey and Uganda, indicated efforts in local host communities and the importance of conserving local knowledge, culture and social welfare and generating benefits for the local communities through sustainable tourism development and promotion in the context of eradicating poverty. Such efforts were found to be important for many small island developing States, such as Barbados, Seychelles and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Therefore, engaging more with indigenous and local communities in heritage conservation and sustainable development for tourism is crucial to mitigating negative impacts on the natural and cultural resources while creating improved economic well-being and authentic, diversified and sustainable tourism development options. Such efforts can help to address and eradicate poverty while offering local communities more options for employment in the tourism sector.

36. Creating employment opportunities in rural areas, with a focus on business opportunities for young people, contributes to their well-being and helps to prevent rural depopulation. There are efforts under way to empower women and young people in sustainable tourism development and policy in Bulgaria, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Germany, Indonesia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Serbia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain, Togo, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe. El Salvador held their first national forum on the prospects and challenges of the rural tourism community in 2013, which directly addressed targets 3 and 9 of Sustainable Development Goal 8 through the publication of Salvadoran Tourism Corporation documents and guidelines for investment in rural, community tourism. Entrepreneurial initiatives for sustainable tourism development and human resource development and capacity-building workshops help to catalyse the entrepreneurship of women, young people and local and indigenous communities in sustainable tourism development. Eighteen of the respondents reported on their local and national initiatives in creating more opportunities for employment and training, thereby helping to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 8 in the tourism sector.

37. By advancing more public-private partnerships in tourism policies and master plans that address the need for more capacity-building and human resource development, more local, community based initiatives and small and medium-sized enterprise products and developments can be made. The UNWTO Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty initiative seeks to raise awareness and help to enhance tourism's catalytic capabilities in poverty alleviation and reduction by means of projects on the ground. In Uganda, UNDP, with UNWTO, is creating linkages between established companies and local tourism small and medium-sized enterprises and mapping needs and priorities for advancing an inclusive and sustainable tourism sector. Another project of the initiative[9] is the Victoria Falls legacy project in Zimbabwe. Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis,

[9] The total project portfolio of the UNWTO Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty initiative has grown to 115 projects, in 45 countries, with a total value of approximately $12 million.

Serbia, Spain, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey and Uganda also reported on projects that are promoting the establishment of more community-based initiatives through capacity-building in sustainable tourism development and small and medium-sized enterprises. Seventeen of the above-mentioned respondents, and Honduras and Slovakia, developed more diversified, domestic, local tourism products for locals and tourists to mitigate issues such as climate change and other environmental and social impacts that tourism can have on the destination. Indonesia's current national programme for community empowerment in the tourism sector focuses specifically on such aspects through rural investment for local product production and capacity-building, environmental conservation and renewable energy management.

38. Increased diversification of products for domestic tourism has been demonstrated in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and especially in Europe, where many respondents reported on creating more rural, alpine, hiking and biking tourism that not only provides alternative transportation for mitigating environmental impacts, but also allows the tourist to celebrate and explore the natural and cultural heritage of the local landscape. Optimal use of alternative modes of transportation also helps in the fight against climate change, in particular in developing countries. Those respondents include Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Israel, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey.

39. Infrastructure development is connected with product diversification and tourism development. Twenty-four respondents reported undertaking infrastructure development or redevelopment to maximize benefits to local communities and tourists, while mitigating the impact on the environment and the sociocultural heritage of the destination. Zimbabwe reported the infrastructure renovations of a self-sustaining facility and local swimming pool as part of the Victoria Falls legacy project. National parks were established in Azerbaijan, whereas, in Turkey, GIS technology was used to map, measure and study the local landscape for a tourism-oriented development project in the Fırat Basin. The project aims at developing the surrounding regions and providing locals with a protected development area for culture and tourism. Infrastructure and landscaping studies have been carried out at the national level, through which respondents reported on infrastructure redevelopment or development in order to effectively promote sustainable tourism and engage with local, national and international stakeholders in developing sustainable tourism and ecotourism products.

40. Many reported on marketing infrastructure and product developments to neighbouring countries in their efforts to increase more "domestic" tourism and local development and improve the conservation of cultural and natural heritage.[10] Of the 22 respondents on rural and heritage tourism development, 16 promote natural and cultural heritage, with Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Seychelles, Turkey and Zimbabwe focusing on cultural heritage. Eleven of those 22, and Barbados, Costa Rica and Honduras, are focusing more on nature-based tourism. Bhutan, Honduras, Spain and Uganda reported on advancing wildlife tourism. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Romania mentioned the development of more food and wine tourism, whereas Germany, Guatemala and Togo explicitly mentioned the importance of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and the need to protect them through sustainable tourism development. In total, 71 per cent of

[10] ILO tourism investment project in Quang Nam Province, Viet Nam.

respondents reported on the need to enhance product development and promotion through marketing and advertisement campaigns to effectively accelerate sustainability in tourism for an authentic, community-based product promoting better heritage conservation and social well-being.

41. Twenty respondents reported on their marketing, mainstreaming and promotion initiatives in sustainable tourism development. Strategies and tools for tourism product development and promotion need to be innovative and modern, which may require technical and financial assistance from the public sector to community-based initiatives, to effectively promote sustainable tourism. Eleven of the respondents reported on the importance of technology and the mobilization of tourism within the sector and the larger economy. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey used GIS and global positioning system technology as part of their product development for implementing a heritage trail, whereas Costa Rica used a GIS mapping platform to measure and monitor levels of poverty in communities.

42. Other respondents also stressed that technology and innovation, as well as sustainable tourism development in general, required the use of more measurement, databases, replicability and scalability and the development of a UNWTO sustainable tourism observatory in order to be managed and monitored properly. Honduras and Indonesia are in the process of establishing an observatory as part of the UNWTO Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories, seeking to monitor and create indicators for climate change and sustainable tourism development, whereas El Salvador plans to develop an observatory as part of its post-2016 policy and plans. The Saint Kitts and Nevis destination toolkit model from Sustainable Travel International has mobilized the development of a Sustainable Destination Alliance for the Americas among Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Panama with regard to replicability and scalability efforts. Many initiatives are concerned with local and tourist access to data, products and other tourism-related information, while focusing on climate change and the environmental and sociocultural impacts of tourism at the destination.

43. As part of the need to protect the environment, Sustainable Development Goal 14 and the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism as a Driver of Development and Peace specifically note the importance of the sustainable use of marine resources, better behaviour at island destinations and the protection of oceans and social welfare. Many respondents reported on the importance of preserving ocean habitats, wildlife and ecosystems through the Blue Flag criteria and sustainable fishing, among other things. That call reiterates the need for tourism and destinations to become more resilient to climate change, rising sea levels and environmental impacts. UNDP and the Global Environment Facility have supported tourism businesses and communities in small island developing States in formulating and implementing a response to the threat posed by climate change. In Honduras, Indonesia and Seychelles, the tourism sector receives support for improving energy efficiency and accessing renewable energy options. Environmental concerns and biodiversity were of primary concern to 26 of the respondents, including small island developing States such as Barbados and the Seychelles, whereas 14 of the respondents were specifically concerned with water management and the use of marine and coastal resources.

44. The respondents showed progress in sustainable tourism policies and plans regarding infrastructure and product development, marketing and measurement. All have developed a focus on conserving and accelerating cultural and natural heritage at the destination while also empowering women and young people to eradicate poverty through stronger capacity-building tools, technical and financial assistance from governments and other entities, plans and the diversification of local products in the tourism sector and beyond. The promotion and implementation of local, community-based projects can add to the accessibility of information and tools that help to manage and monitor tourism development at the national and global levels, monitor impacts on the environment, economy, society and culture and create more replicable and scalable tourism plans and policies to be applied at the local, national and global levels. That will, in turn, help to ensure the compatible reporting and standardization of international criteria with local level community projects on the ground.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

45. **Progress in the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, has resulted in its incorporation into national policies and priorities. Member States and international development institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of locally developed tourism products, public-private cooperation and measurement in sustainable tourism as a means to achieve economic growth, reduce inequalities, improve livelihoods in developing countries and lessen negative environmental and sociocultural impacts. The need for adequate support to programmes and projects related to sustainable tourism, which include financial and technical assistance and international standardization of sustainability criteria, has been identified by some Member States as being an urgent priority. In that, regard the General Assembly may wish:**

(a) **To recommend that all Member States review their current tourism frameworks and policies in order to fully integrate sustainable tourism and thus maximize the growing economic and sociocultural importance of the tourism sector, using the tourism sector's ability as an agent of change in accelerating the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns;**

(b) **To stress the need to foster resilient tourism development that is prepared for external shocks, whether they are caused by natural or man-made hazards, through, among other things, improved integration of the tourism and emergency sectors, private-public cooperation and the diversification of activities and products;**

(c) **To encourage Governments, international organizations and the tourism sector to continue conducting assessments and the regular, timely monitoring of the environmental and sociocultural impacts of tourism while also evaluating the effectiveness of various forms of tourism in terms of poverty alleviation, environmental and cultural protection and the promotion of sustainable development;**

(d) **To invite Governments, the tourism sector and relevant organizations, to engage with and empower indigenous and local communities,**

including women and young people, with regard to their expertise, knowledge and values and to promote their full and active participation in all tourism operations and in the development of policies and practices addressing sustainability issues aimed at poverty reduction, especially in the developing segments of populations;

(e) To encourage Governments, international organizations and the tourism sector to improve efforts to regularly measure the role of sustainable tourism in order to allow more evidence-based decision-making, replicability and scalability at the local and national levels, especially in the context of other economic activities and with the use of innovative technologies to address sociocultural and environmental impacts;

(f) To invite Governments and other relevant stakeholders interested in creating national measurement and monitoring models of sustainability to welcome regional initiatives, such as the European Tourism Indicator System, and join the framework of the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories in order to improve sustainable development and measurement, share best practices and monitor the impact of tourism on local communities at the destination level with regard to the economic, environmental and in particular the sociocultural dimensions;

(g) To invite Governments and relevant stakeholders to support local and regional efforts in biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation by:

(i) Engaging with key stakeholders to ensure ownership at the various levels, in particular at the local level;

(ii) Diversifying local tourism products for the promotion of domestic tourism, local, small and medium-sized enterprises and sustainable consumption and production in the tourism sector;

(iii) Accelerating sustainable consumption and production through marketing campaigns for relevant stakeholders, including tourists, the private sector, national tourism and protected areas authorities;

(h) To encourage Governments, the United Nations and specialized agencies to support the coordination, alignment and accessibility of international sustainable tourism development frameworks, standards, certifications and other criteria that ensure compatibility, replicability and scalability at the local level in order to assist countries with the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, that actively supports poverty alleviation and environment protection by:

(i) Supporting local best practice models that measure sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, targeting poverty alleviation and heritage conservation;

(ii) Consulting regional models, such as transboundary parks, marine protected areas and corridors that encourage cooperative environmental and social management;

(iii) Applying the principles, models and indicators set out in the UNWTO mechanism for poverty alleviation through tourism under the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty initiative, the Global Code of

Ethics for Tourism and by the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories, as well as other internationally recognized standards and criteria on sustainability for tourism development;

(i) To invite the United Nations, specialized agencies and other organizations and multilateral financial institutions to provide technical and financial assistance to Governments to assist, as appropriate, in:

(i) Supporting sustainable tourism public-private partnerships and voluntary, third-party, independent, internationally-recognized certifications that include biodiversity protection criteria, in order to develop accountability mechanisms;

(ii) Improving and advancing international and national certification and standardization criteria through voluntary, non-traditional and traditional, local-level measurements and effective stakeholder engagement;

(iii) Ensuring that investments in the tourism sector contribute towards conserving biodiversity, cultural heritage and community development and helping businesses implement sustainable practices;

(iv) Building capacity through workshops that support marketing and product positioning for local communities and small and medium-sized enterprises;

(v) Developing diversified, local, community-based sustainable tourism products that can ensure market access and local well-being that can be offered, promoted and marketed as complementary products in the region;

(vi) Developing awareness-raising materials that target local development, empowerment of women and indigenous people and youth entrepreneurship and innovation, in order to ensure the sustainability of the tourism sector and its contribution to the country's development objectives;

(j) To invite the United Nations, specialized agencies and relevant stakeholders to improve the transfer, application, financing and dissemination of innovative technologies in the effort to diversify local products, enhance local capacity-building and accelerate sustainable tourism for environmental and sociocultural well-being.

Annex

Survey of the World Tourism Organization on the implementation of resolution 69/233 on the promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection

List of respondents (as at 27 July 2016)

1. Austria[a]
2. Azerbaijan
3. Bangladesh
4. Barbados
5. Bhutan
6. Brunei Darussalam[a]
7. Bulgaria[a]
8. Bosnia and Herzegovina[a]
9. Colombia[a]
10. Costa Rica[a]
11. Croatia[a]
12. El Salvador[a]
13. Germany[a]
14. Guatemala[a]
15. Honduras[a]
16. Indonesia
17. Israel
18. Lebanon
19. Malaysia
20. Morocco[a]
21. Myanmar
22. Romania
23. Saint Kitts and Nevis
24. Serbia
25. Seychelles
26. Slovakia
27. Spain[a]
28. Togo
29. Tunisia[a]
30. Turkey[a]
31. Uganda
32. Zimbabwe

[a] Also responded to the survey conducted in 2014.